Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, JO, US

SUBJ: JORDANIAN DEMARCHE ON JERUSALEM

REF: STATE 173; JERUSALEM 2202

- 1. IN RESPONSE TO PARTICULAR POINTS RAISED IN DEPARTMENT REFTEL WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS IN ADDITION TO THOSE CONTAINED JERUSALEM 2202.
- 2. JERUSALEM POST ARTICLE OF OCTOBER 29 REPORTING HOUSING MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENT OF PLANS TO BUILD 10,000 APARTMENT UNITS IN NEVE YA'ACOV FRENCH HILL AREA APPEARED TO INDICATE THAT THESE PLANS REPRESENTED, IN EFFECT, HOUSING MINISTRY PROPOSAL WITHIN ISRAELI GOVERNMENT AS A WHOLE. AS WE REPORTED IN A-94, THERE WAS SOME OPPOSITION TO THESE PLANS, NOTABLY FROM MAYOR KOLLEK (ON TECHNICAL RATHER THAN POLITICAL GROUNDS). WE DO NOT KNOWN WHETHER ISRAELI GOVERNMENT AS SUCH HAS DETERMINED TO PROCEED WITH CONSTRUCTION. WE HAVE SEEN NO EVIDENCE ON THE GROUND OF THIS, BUT THAT WOULD HARDLY BE EXPECTED THIS SOON IN ANY CASE. THERE HAVE BEEN PERSISTENT REPORTS OF LARGE-SCALE ISRAELI LAND ACQUISITION IN THIS GENERAL AREA, BUT SUCH REPORTS ARE ALWAYS HARD TO PIN DOWN.

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3. FOLLOWING ISRAELI CABINET DECISION TO PROCEED WITH

CONSTRUCTION OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AT MA'ALE ADUMMIM THERE WERE NUMBER OF NEWSPAPER REPORTS TO EFFECT THAT WORK WAS COMMENCING. KOLLEK HAD PUBLICLY CALLED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF ACCESS RAOD BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE WAS DONE, AND WE HAD UNDERSTOOD THIS WAS BEING STARTED. WE HAVE OURSELVES SEEN NO ACTIVITY AT THE SITE BEYOND EVIDENCE OF SOME VEHICULAR MOVEMENT WHICH COULD WELL BE MILITARY. WE HAVE IMPRESSION THAT AUTHORITIES WERE ENDEAVORING TO REASSURE HARD-LINE OPPOSITION ELEMENTS WITH TALKS ABOUT IMMEDIATE CONSTRUCTION BUT THAT PROJECT WILL NOT PROCEED SO REPIDLY. SITE SELECTED IS REMOTE FROM WATER AND UTILITIES AND IS SIMPLY UNDULATING PLATEAU IN DESERT HILLS. IT WILL CLEARLY BE VERY EXPENSIVE AND TIME-CONSUMING TO PUT ANY SUBSTANTIAL INDUSTRIES THERE.

4. WHILE, AS WE HAVE REPORTED, ISRAELIS ARE BUILDING PARKS AROUND CITY WALLS, FIGURE OF 30,000 DUNUMS IS NEW TO US AND SEEMS VERY HIGH. PARKS ALREADY ESTABLISHED ARE EITHER ON ISRAELI SIDE OF TOWN (EAST OF KING DAVID HOTEL) OR IN FORMER NO MAN'S LAND. ONE SUCH PARK AREA IN NO MAN'S LAND OPPOSITE DAMASCUS GATE WAS SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED BY KOLLEK IN JERUSALEM POST INTERVIEW MENTIONED IN JERUSALEM REFTEL. (HE SAID "IT MEANT THAT WE INTEND TO STAY".) THERE IS SOME ROOM FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT ALONG SOUTHERN WALL AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT MAZAR DIG SOUTH OF FORMER TEMPLE MOUNT WILL BE INCORPORATED IN SUCH AN AREA. ALONG NORTHERN WALL THE PARK CONSISTS OF GREENERY ONLY A FEW METERS WIDE. ON EASTERN PERIPHERY, OLD CITY WALL IS FLANKED BY MUSLIM CEMETARY WHICH WE DOUBT ISRAELIS WOULD TURN INTO A PARK (THOUGH THEY DID SO AFTER 1948 WITH MAMILLAH CEMETERY IN WEST JERUSALEM). WE HAVE TRIED TO GET MORE PRECISE INFORMATION ON PLANS FOR PARK SINCE RECEIPT OF AMMAN CABLES BUT HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO REACH OFFICIAL CONCERNED. WE DOUBT. AS INDICATED JERUSALEM REFTEL, THAT THESE PLANS SHOULD BE CASUE FOR SIGNIFICANT CONCERN. DAY

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